

Merck, C.

Drawer 19A

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# Artists of Abraham Lincoln portraits

C. Merck

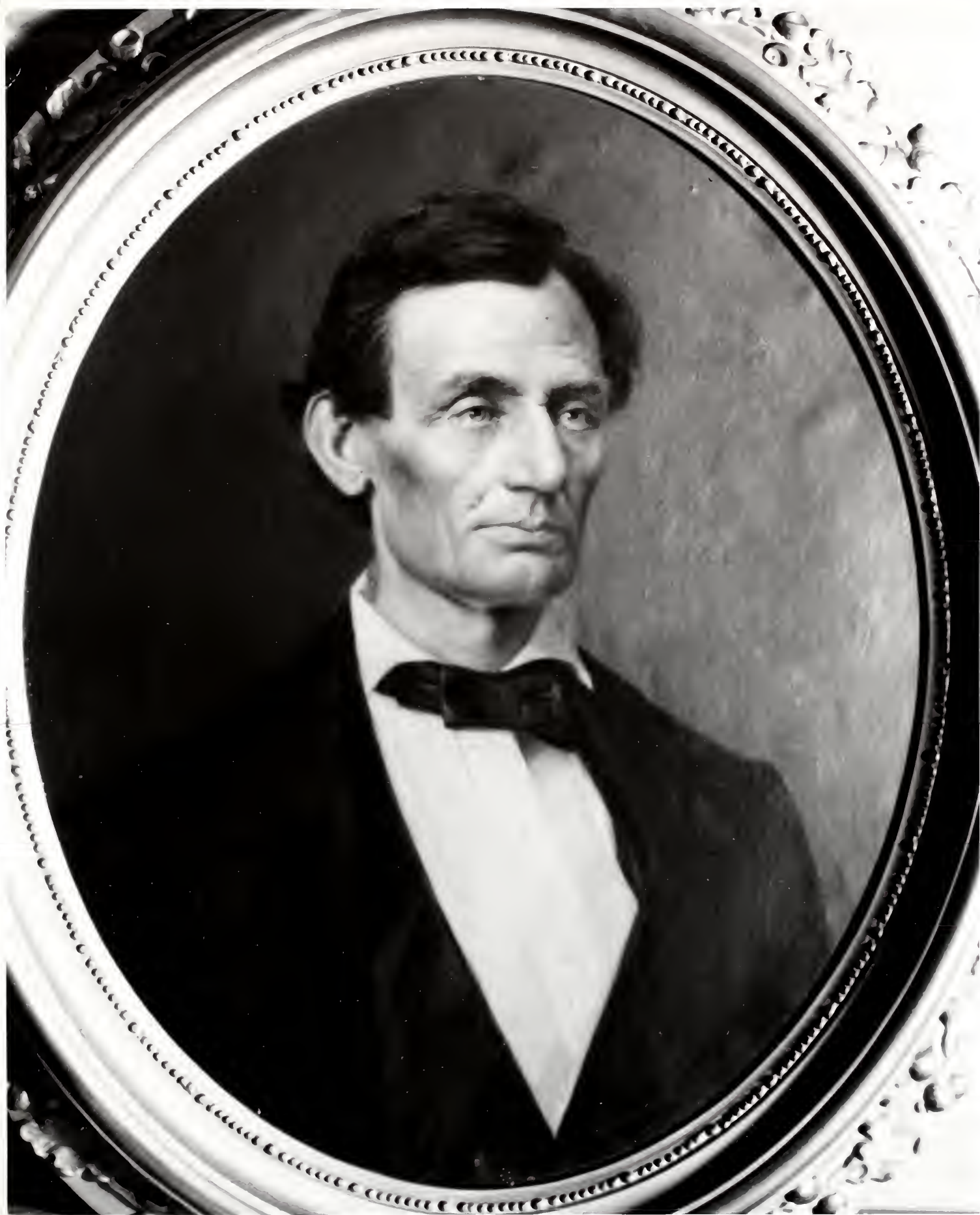
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sources

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Abraham Lincoln by C. Merck, Chicago.

Hangs in office of Atton Telegraph, Atton, Ill.  
By courtesy of Paul S. Cousley, publisher



# "OLD ABE" MEMORIES

Lincoln's Connection with the Extinct Village of Postville.

## SOME INTERESTING SCENES

Portrait That Was Carried by the Atlanta "Wide Awakes."

When Lincoln Told Stories David Davis Let Lawyers Talk to a Deaf Bench.

Lincoln, Ill., Jan. 9.—Special Correspondence.—Although the village of Postville is no longer given a place on our maps, but was absorbed by her more vigorous neighbor and become a part of the City of Lincoln over thirty years ago, yet the first courthouse erected in Logan County is still standing on

Postville hill, where it was erected in 1840. This building, a sketch of which is given in this column, is one which is always pointed out as being one with whose history Abraham Lincoln is closely associated, as when he was an attorney he always attended the sessions of court held within its walls. The old house has been used for a dwelling ever since the removal of the county seat to Mount Pulaski, in 1848, but yet the individuality of the man was so great that when a new town was founded, five years later, it was called Lincoln in his honor.

When the county seat was at Mount Pulaski, Mr. Lincoln continued his visits to the Logan County court, and it was during his last visit there, in 1855, that he recognized the fact that his eyesight was beginning to fail with the strain of years. He stopped at the house of Thomas Lushbough, who had been his next-door neighbor at Springfield, and his roommate was John T. Stuart, another Springfield attorney. After they would retire for the night it was Mr. Lincoln's habit to draw the stand table up to the side of the bed, light the lamp, and then prop himself up on his pillow, where he would read the statutes of the state and study his law books as long as he could remain awake. Then again in the morning he would resume his reading as soon as he awakened. One night while reading thus he seemed to notice that something was wrong, and, turning to his bedfellow, he said: "Stuart, do you notice how my eyes are failing? See how I am pushing my book away from me."

This was during the last term of court held at the Mount, for before the next term of court the county seat had been removed to the town named in Mr. Lincoln's honor, and which had already outstripped its rivals in the county. There a new courthouse had been built similar to the one whose picture appears below. In that building Mr. Lincoln appeared to plead, as he had in years before in the one on Postville Hill two miles away. The building, however, did not stand long, for it was destroyed by fire April 14, 1857. A new one, a picture of which is given here, stood on the same foundations before that year was ended, in which Mr. Lincoln's fast friend, David Davis, occupied the bench during many terms of court.

Mr. Lincoln continued his visits to the City of Lincoln up to the time of his nomination for the Presidency, and by his story telling always kept his friends in good humor. Of Judge Davis it is told that his laughter could be heard for the distance of two blocks away from the old Eagle Hotel when "Honest Abe" told stories to the "boys" at night.

The Judge's seat was high above the common people, too high, Judge Davis insisted,

On one occasion when a case was being tried in which Lincoln was not interested he sat with the other members of the bar about a long walnut table just below the bar of justice, telling them anecdotes. The titter of laughter from the lawyers and some noise among the spectators annoyed Judge Davis,

was in

him to talk of Lincoln is to speak with tear-bedimmed eyes.

A historic painting is one by C. Merck of Chicago, which hangs in the house of Mr. Nathaniel E. Pegram. Painted in July of 1860 from a sitting made in Springfield for Mr. Merck in the second month after Mr. Lincoln's nomination for the Presidency, the picture was prominently displayed throughout that campaign. In 1862 the home of Colonel R. M. Hough was thrown open to the sanitary commission and a fair conducted there for its benefit. This painting was one of the features of the display, and, after being sold several times and donated back to the fair, it was finally purchased by Colonel Hough himself, he paying \$62.50 for it. It followed the Colonel through his checkered career, until a short time before his death, when he placed it in the hands of its present owner.

Another highly prized picture of Mr. Lincoln is the one owned by ex-Circuit Clerk Koehnle. It also dates from the campaign of 1860, at which time it was painted for the "Wide Awakes" of this city by Reuben Neal. Its style is a painting in imitation of steel-engraving, and the artist was well acquainted with Mr. Lincoln. This acquaintance gave him a familiarity with the face of the subject, which enabled him to make a likeness which has been pronounced among the best of the period. Many other pictures of Lin-

coln were painted by Mr. Neal, with the assistance of his nephew, Reuben Neal Lawrence, during the campaign, but of these there is but one in existence now and it is the one carried by the Atlanta "Wide Awakes," during the exciting rallies of 1860. This was the second company of "Wide Awakes," organized in Illinois, that of Ellsworth being its predecessor, and, on account of its banner bearing the likeness of both candidates, it was placed at the head of the parade at the monster rally at Springfield, which concluded that memorable campaign. Besides painting its banner, young

Lawrence was the captain of the company, and when at its head carried the sword which was worn by Anthony Wayne at Ticonderoga. After the election of Mr. Lincoln he took the picture from its stretcher and carefully preserved it, while the picture belonging to the Lincoln company of "Wide Awakes" was preserved by its hearers, and for twelve years hung in the courthouse here.

W. O. PAISLEY.

No Title





THE SUNDAY INTER OCEAN, JANUARY 12, 1896.

## "OLD ABE" MEMORIES

Painting of Abraham Lincoln

A historic painting is one by C. Merck of Chicago which hangs in the house of Mr. Nathaniel E. Peopam. Painted in July of 1860 from a sitting made in April of 1860 for Mr. Merck in the second month after Mr. Lincoln's nomination for the Presidency, the picture was prominently displayed throughout that campaign. In 1862 the home of Colonel R. M. Hough was thrown open to the sanitary commission and a fair conducted there for its benefit. This painting was one of the features of the display; and after being sold several times and devoted back to the fair, it was finally purchased by Colonel Hough himself, he paying \$62.50 for it. It followed the Colonel through his checkered career, until he placed it in the hands of its present owner."



## *Lincoln Portrait at Telegraph Was Painted by C. Merck in 1860*



Recently the Telegraph submitted to an art firm for a skillful cleaning a prized portrait of Abraham Lincoln, painted from life. As a result of the portrait being cleaned, after many years of neglect to wash it, there were revealed new beauties of the portrait. Also there appeared a signature of the artist, "C. Merck, Chicago, 7, 1860," meaning that the picture was painted in July, 1860. That would date it as having been painted during the time Abraham Lincoln was campaigning for election as president in 1860, and it was painted from life.

The Telegraph has been unable to get any but a slight amount of information about the artist. Inquiry was made through the Has- kin Information Bureau at Washington, and by that bureau the inquiry was referred to the Chicago

Art Institute. Not having available any fact about Artist Merck, the secretary of the Art Institute referred the inquiry to the Chicago Historical Society. Then the reply came back that search in the Historical Society records revealed only that there was a portrait painter named Charles Merck working in Chicago in 1860.

Many portraits of Lincoln were painted during the period he was campaigning for president, and Carl Sandburg says that he sat for many pictures in that time. The Telegraph's portrait of Lincoln was one of those made in the months when artists were making many oil portraits of the then presidential candidate. The portrait was presented to the Telegraph in her lifetime by the late Mrs. Hosea B. Sparks. It had been in the family of her parents, (the Pegrams, at Lincoln, Ill.) for many years.



Feb 26 1949

Dear Paul,

My mother who is still in Florida with Uncle Hode, has sent me a clipping from a recent issue of the Telegraph about your having the Lincoln portrait cleaned and finding the name of the painter under the dirt. When I was a child in the Lincoln house, <sup>(Ill.)</sup> I remember the name being plainly visible, but that was around the first of the century, since I didn't live there after 1916. Do you know the story of the portrait?

My grandfather, Nathaniel Edward Pegram, who lived in Lincoln from early in 1858, knew Mr Lincoln as a neighbor in Springfield and was one of the Daring Young People who called themselves Republicans. After Mr Lincoln was elected President, in 1863, to be exact, there was a Sanitary Fair held in Chicago at which was at least one portrait of him taken during the time he was running for the office. The Sanitary Commission was sort of a fore-runner of the Red Cross and during the Civil War, ladies made bandages and packed food for distribution to the soldiers by the Sanitary Commission. At the end of the Sanitary Fair Grandfather Pegram bought the portrait and hung it in the dining room of his house on





north McLean street in Lincoln where I lived as a child,  
The house is now torn down.

I have learned from the Historical Society that  
there was a second Sanitary Fair in 1865, after the assassi-  
nation, but I think any portraits of Mr Lincoln at this  
later exposition would have been painted later in his  
life, showing the beard. I think we may assume that  
this one came from the first Fair.

After the house was disposed of, my Aunt Anna a  
gave the portrait to Hodie who had it hung in the Mill off-  
ice, as of course you remember and it was when the situation  
there became impermanent that it was transferred to the  
Telegraph office which is undoubtedly the best place for it.

I suggest, if you haven't already done so, that  
you have a brief history printed up and pasted on the  
back for the benefit of posterity.

Love from us all to you and Sister-

*Ann Katherine  
McLean*





# ALTON EVENING TELEGRAPH

111 EAST BROADWAY • ALTON, ILLINOIS 62004

PAUL S. COUSLEY  
Publisher

July 16, 1968  
XXXXXXxxxxxx

Miss Betty U. Ladden,  
Associate Curator of Art,  
Illinois State Museum,  
Springfield, Ill. 62706

Dear Miss Ladden:

Noting the comparative vacuum of the museum's information on the Merck picture of Lincoln, I'm sending you copies of a new story we published about the picture back in 1949 along with a copy of a letter from Ann Katherine, clerk to my father. Mr. McLeary was a sort of ward of my great uncle and aunt, Mr. and Mrs. H. W. (Hodie) Sparks, referred to in the letter. The mill office referred to was that of the Sparks Milling Co., since dissolved, whose office quarters now are occupied by our United Fund.

The grandfather again mentioned is the father of Mrs. H. W. Sparks.

We have other material here on the subject, too, but this seemed the most condensed.

I hope this will be of additional help in establishing an informational chain for you that can lead to something better. Please let us know what you find.

Paul S. Cousley, Publisher





# ALTON EVENING TELEGRAPH

111 EAST BROADWAY • ALTON, ILLINOIS 62004

PAUL S. COUSLEY  
Publisher

August 6, 1968

Miss Betty U. Madden,  
Associate Curator of Art,  
Illinois State Museum,  
Springfield, Ill. 62706

Dear Miss Madden:

Enclosed is a copy of a letter from my uncle, Richard D. Sparks of Prescott, Ariz. He is the last of my mother's brothers still living, and, to boot, is the history and culture buff of the family. I thought he might have remembered some remark in the past from some of the Sparks family which would indicate a relation ship between the Houghs and the Pegrams and thus provide a link explaining the transfer of the Lincoln painting from Col. Hough to the Pegram family, as noted in your Chicago newspaper clipping.

As you see, his version of the family's acquisition of the portrait was simply that it was purchased at the Sanitary Commission fair by Mr. Pegram. That leads me to wonder whether the Pegrams, after purchasing the portrait, might for some reason have left it for Col. Hough to keep for them, since, as the clipping indicates, Col. Hough had repurchased it so many times after auction at the fair.

You'll note my Uncle Dick's typing -- deteriorating disk, jangled nerves, and all -- is more accurate than mine. He's quite a guy. He held forth for years in the Sparks Milling Co. office (right near the federal prison site) and, as you note, saw a great deal of the painting.

Col. Hough must have been quite a man, too. Wish we could find more about him.

Best wishes,

  
PAUL S. COUSLEY





August 1, 1968:

Dear Paulie,

Your very interesting letter about the Lincoln portrait roused old memories. I can't siting under it at the desk Uncle Node had used as one of my greatest privileges. For it is undoubtedly the most poignant and human of the Lincoln portraits. The faint face and the eyes are unforgettable. I am so glad you have it.

Uncle Node simply said that Mr. Pogram bought it at a Sanitary Commission Fair auction in Springfield and I heard him say this many times. The Sanitary Commission was equal to Red Cross, which was established later on. I do not remember a signature on it so cannot help you with that. I would think you should stick to the information given you by the Museum for news purposes though I never heard of Mr. Houth in connection with the portrait. If you use it the illustration should be colored as the coloring and shading are most important. Do send me copy of anything you publish.

My delay in answering your letter has been due to my health. For five or six years I have had trouble with my legs-pain and handicap. This increased after Joannie's death. Then it became intense after the blizzard we had last December. My M.D. said it was just approaching old age. About six or seven weeks ago it became acute and when a "general physical" showed nothing he sent me to an Osteopathic Surgeon here who is a genius. In his first examination Dr. Parson asked whether I had ever had any spinal trouble and I remembered the two "disc clippages" about 35 years ago. He spotted them instantly and said they had disintegrated slowly for years but recently had deteriorated until they had "killed" my nerves, muscles and stabilizing. He has invalided me at home for two months of treatment asking my cooperation in making no effort whatever. I am sure, after third treatment, he is on the right track. I have been exhausted by the slightest effort-even writing letters which I will stop doing. Mrs. Irene Bunn is taking care of me and I will pass the time with my Stereo



Merck, C.

2 Boston Club, painted in July 2, 1960 from a letter  
written by my father for his work in the Boston Club  
after his father's contribution to the President.

Now in time of Nathaniel & Pagan

He paid <sup>7</sup>62.50 for it

Su John Smith Jr



Merck, C.

DRAWER 19A

Art. 512-M

